

# Worried Man Blues

(a.k.a. "Wearied Man Blues", "Worried Man Song", "It Takes A Worried Man")

Words & Music:  
Traditional American

*Everyone knows who has recorded this song -- The Carter Family, Blind Boy Fuller, Woody Guthrie & Cisco Houston, Lonnie Donegan, The Kingston Trio, etc. -- but its writer is a murkier discussion (and makes the last line rather ironic). The earliest reference I've heard is it as a worksong, and sung much slower, in the Oklahoma oil fields in the 1920s (see the discussions on Mudcat Café). I'm inclined to agree. Soungound Stephen Kermode sent along the song. I've included his version and the one used by The Carter Family and Woody Guthrie & Cisco Houston.*

## 1. Stephen Kermode's version

CHORUS:

G  
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,  
C G  
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,  
G  
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,  
D G  
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long.

CHORUS:

I went across the river, I laid down to sleep. [3x]  
When I woke up, there were shackles on my feet.

Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg. [3x]  
And on each link, the initial of my name.

CHORUS:

I asked the judge what might be my fine. [3x]  
Twenty-one years on the Rocky Mountain Line.

The train that I ride, sixteen coaches long. [3x]  
The girl I love is on that train and gone.

CHORUS:

If anyone asks you who composed this song, [3x]  
Tell him it was I and I sing it all day long.

CHORUS:

## 2. The Carter Family's version.

CHORUS:

A  
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,  
D A  
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,  
E A  
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long.

I went across the river, I laid down to sleep. [2x]  
When I woke up, there were shackles on my feet.

CHORUS:

Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg. [2x]  
And on each link, the initial of my name.

CHORUS:

I asked the judge what might be my fine. [2x]  
Twenty-one years on the Rocky Mountain Line.

CHORUS:

The train that I ride, sixteen coaches long. [2x]  
The girl I love is on that train and gone.

CHORUS:

If anyone asks you who composed this song, [2x]  
Tell him 'twas I and I sing it all day long.

CHORUS: